

Courtesy: House Agriculture Committee

Maintaining Current Policies, Realizing Savings from Duplicative Programs

The House Agriculture deficit reduction package maintains current farm bill policies and an agriculture safety net so that the nation's farmers and ranchers can make decisions with assurances that the policies of the 2002 Farm Bill will remain intact throughout the Act's duration.

- The House Agriculture Committee produced a deficit reduction package yielding \$3.7 billion worth of savings from mandatory program reforms.
 - Reforms in agriculture commodity programs contribute \$1 billion worth of savings, reductions in future enrollment of conservation programs yield \$734 million in savings, the elimination of unfunded programs provide \$469 million in savings, the elimination of a research program provides \$620 million in savings, and the tightening of eligibility requirements for food stamps yields \$844 million in savings.
- Farmers who receive direct payments from commodities programs that were authorized under the generous 2002 Farm Bill will see only a 1 penny reduction on every \$1 worth of benefits.
- Savings is also derived from the Conservation Security Program by limiting future enrollment, meaning the savings does not affect any farmer currently participating in the program.
- A number of other programs which have not received funding in the Appropriations process are eliminated, as many of these programs would have provided duplicative benefits anyway.
 - Example: funding for rural firefighting and emergency grants is eliminated as the program did not receive money in previous appropriations cycles, however FIRE grants from the Department of Homeland Security provide over \$750 million a year to urban and rural fire departments.
- Since money has not been made available for these programs, services are not being delivered, no constituency has been built up for these programs, and people will not be adversely affected when funds are no longer authorized.